ان الدين عند الله الاسلام

# The Review of Religions

Edited by Ghulam Farid Malik, M. A.

Vol. XXXII MAY, 1933 No. 5

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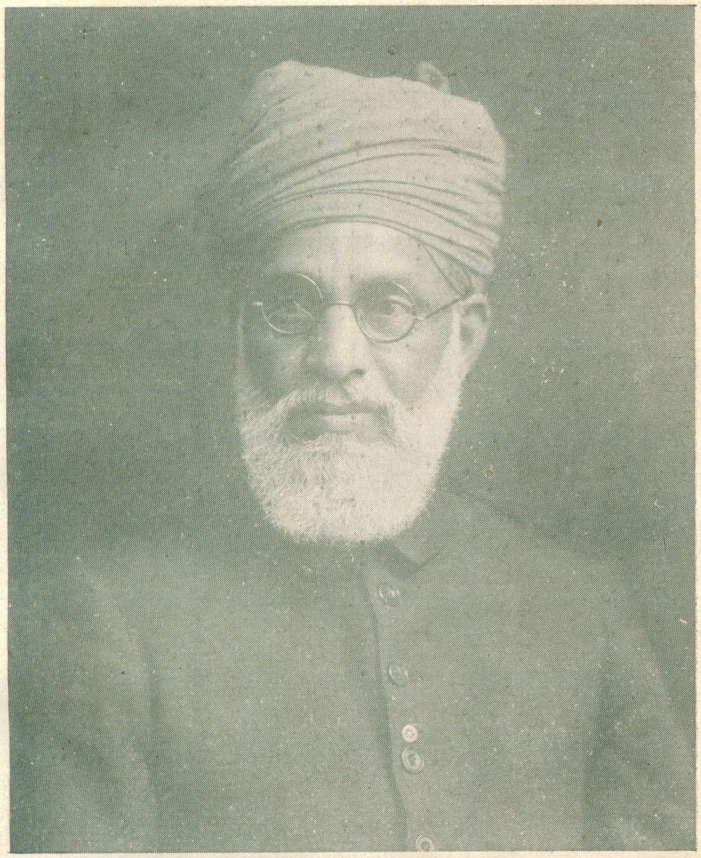

KHAN SAHIB FARZAND ALI

Who after five years' very strenuous and successful work handed over charge of the London Mission on 12th March, 1933, to Mr. A.R. DARD, M.A. The Khan Sahib reached Qadian on 11th April.

Mr. A. R. DARD, M. A.

Who took over charge of the London Mission from Khan Sahib Farzand Ali on 12th March, 1933.

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بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent and the most Merciful
We praise Him and invoke His blessings upon
His exalted Prophet.

*"A prophet came unto the world and the world accepted him not, but God shall accept him and establish his truth with mighty signs."*

## HUMANITY'S GREATEST BENEFACTOR—MUHAMMAD

### VII

### Scrupulous regard for word of honour

The Prophet was extremely jealous of his word of honour. He had an equal regard for the word of honour of an ordinary Muslim given to a friend, a stranger or an enemy. He always rigidly adhered to the spirit and letter of his pacts and pledges. While on his way to a battle with the Quresh, he was met, one day, by two Muslims who had come from Mecca. They wanted to join in the expedition. But when they told the Prophet that they were allowed to leave Mecca on the understanding that they would not fight against the Meccans, he sternly refused to let them join the Muslim army. "If you have thus committed yourself and have given your word of honour to the Meccans," said the Prophet, "you cannot be allowed to break it

by taking part in the battle against them. 11 The Prophet of God cannot permit a breach of trust." The Prophet taught his followers the sanctity and inviolability of pledges and promises. He had taught them that they should be redeemed at any cost and no considerations of any kind could stand in the way of their fulfilment. And such was the attractive way of our Prophet that he was always the first to faithfully act upon the teaching he exhorted his companions to follow. " What you do not like for yourself, do not like for others," has remained only a beautiful maxim which has, perhaps, been honoured more in its breach than in its observance. But our Prophet translated this maxim into solid, actual fact whenever an occasion arose for him to do so. Just consider for a moment that with only 300 Muslims the Prophet is going to fight an army of 1,000 strong, better-equipped, better-armed and better-provisioned. He meets on the way two persons who being tried and experienced swordsmen are evidently of immense use to him on the field of battle. They are anxious and impatient and have come with the sole aim and purpose, to take part in the Prophet's first trial of strength with his enemies. He badly needs their help. But he does not allow them to join the very thin ranks of the Muslim army and urges upon them to keep their word. This incident shows how great and scrupulous was the Prophet's regard for the word of honour given by any of his followers to a friend or foe and how very much anxious he was that his companions should recognise and realize the sanctity and sacredness of the pledges and pacts made with even the enemy who was actually at war with them.

Besides national and social equality, the Prophet established religious and spiritual equality as well. Among religious reformers and teachers of humanity he was the first to declare that the door of revelation was equally open for every individual, community, or nation. He proclaimed that he was sent for the whole of mankind and that all peoples were equal in the sight of God and that distinctions and differences of high and low, poor and rich, white, brown or black, did not count with Him and all could equally win His pleasure and become heir to His Grace, Mercy and Blessings.

## Establishment of Peace

The seventh great favour that the Prophet did to mankind was that he laid down principles and prescribed means, methods and measures which if carried into effect, attended with good intentions and sincerity of purpose, are calculated to establish peace on earth and bring about harmony, amity, love and goodwill among different nations. The following are a few of those precious principles :—

(*a*) The belief held by the followers of almost all the great religious systems that all the religions other than their own are false and therefore their adherents and votaries eternalfy damned, has often led to communal feuds and fights. This belief is in evident conflict with reason and common sense and revolting to human nature. The followers of every faith and the inhabitants of every country without any distinction whatever, consider themselves, rightly and consistently with common sense, as much the creatures and servants of God and regard themselves as much deserving of His Grace and Mercy as any other people. So the belief of being the exclusive recepients of God's favours when entertained and expressed by one people is sure to exite feelings of jealousy and contempt against them in the hearts of other people and this fact leads to communal fights and fracases. The Holy Prophet barred and bolted the door on communal warfare by declaring that " there has not been a people among whom a Prophet of God has not appeared." By this declaration the divine origin of all great religions has been accepted by Islam and homage paid to the holiness and purity of their illustrious founders. This declaration, as far as a Muslim is concerned, strikes at the root of all religious acrimony and bitterness, and hatred which is born of limiting and confining God's favour to a particular community receives a death blow. He knows and believes that Truth, from whatever quarter it comes, is Truth and that all religions are based upon Truth and, therefore, in spite of the differences which exist in his own conception of the Ultimate Reality and that of other people, he feels that there is a chord of union which binds them all and that the

unconditional and complete rejection of any one of the religions means a denial of God's all-pervading and all-comprehensive mercy.

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This is how the Holy Prophet has placed religious peace on a firm footing. A Hindu, a Christian or a Jew can have no ligitimate ground of complaint or quarrel with a Muslim on a religious basis because the latter, consistently with the teaching of his own religion, is bound to respect and revere the memory of Krishna, Jesus and Moses as he does that of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all). A Muslim's position is impregnable. He need not find fault with other religions and pick holes in the coats of the founders and leaders of religions other than his own to estalish the truth and superiority of his faith. If he is told that a Prophet appeared at a particular time among a tribe in Africa or America, he will experience no difficulty in believing in this statement because according to his belief God's mercy has not remained confined to the Indians, the Arabs or the Persians alone. His messengers appeared in all countries and among all peoples. A Muslim will not set limit to God's limitless mercy and therefore will equally respect and revere the founders of all religions. It is not difficult to realize the vast extent to which this noble teaching of the Prophet of Islam goes to create an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill among the followers of different faiths.

Another very real and potent cause that largely contributes to the creation of bad blood among different communities are the scurrilous attacks that are made not on the revered leaders of different religions but on their principles, beliefs and teachings. The Holy Prophet has not omitted to deal with this cause also. The Quran rays :—

> " Do not abuse those things which are the objects of veneration for the followers of other faiths. However strongly you may be convinced of the falsity and error of their beliefs and practices, you are not justified to speak disparágingly of them because such an attitude on your part is calculated to wound their susceptibilities which may lead

to the disturbance of the peace. Moreover they will begin to talk slightingly of your principles and will seek their revenge in abusing God ! " (6 : 109).

How grand and creative of peace this teaching is ! Those of the sages and seers of other religions who were God's true messengers, the Muslims are enjoined by their Prophet to believe in them and about those of their principles and practices which are demonstrably foolish and repugnant to sound reason and common sense, they are commanded not to use slighting or vituperative language.

The third equally important factor that often leads to religious strife is the general tendency among religious people that the followers of one religion refuse to see any beauty whatever in other religious systems and declare all of them to be totally devoid of any good. Islam has not failed to remove this cause also. The Quran says :—

" The Jews say that the Christians possess no good and the Christians say that the Jews are devoid of all excellences and both read the Book of God. That is to say when they read the Book of God they should have known that nothing in this world is altogether bad. However bad a thing may be, it possesses some good and when it ceases to be of any use whatever, it is not allowed to exist. How is it then that the Jews and Christians say in regard to each other that there is no good in them."

A Muslim who thinks that Hinduism is full of defects only or a Hindu who believes that Islam contains no good or a Christian who considers both Islam and Hinduism to be worthless stuff, fit to be thrown on the dung heap, sets the seal on his own lack of intelligence and common sense. No religion, in fact, nothing in the world, is allowed to exist when it becomes completely despoiled of every good, beauty or excellence. The fact that these religions are existing and in them, rightly or wrongly, millions of people have found the solace and satisfaction of their souls is alone an incontestible proof of the great good that is in them. But to Islam belongs the credit of

enjoining its followers to admit and appreciate the good wherever it may be found. In fact it is moral pussilanimity or the narrownesss of one's mental vision to refuse to recognise and acknowledge or not to be able to see, the good points of other peoples

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## Sincere and honest belief respected

In addition to the above-mentioned measures that the Prophet adopted to establish peace may be added another equally effective step that he took to ensure its perpetuation in the world. He presented this truth before the world that not only that Prophets had appeared among all peoples and they should be respected and revered and that every faith and religious system in the world possessed beauties and excellences in varying degrees, but he taught also that among the followers and adherents of every religion a very large majority believed in the truth of its precepts, tenents and practices quite sincerely and seriously. So this irrepressible desire among the followers of every religion and the effort they make to know, understand and act upon what is true and good, cannot fail to be recognised and appreciated, though the beliefs and practices of their faith may be wrong and erroneous. This open and generous recognition of even the wrong beliefs and misguided practices of the followers of other faiths was one of the outstanding features of the Prophet's noble character and he has set his followers an example in this respect to imitate and emulate. Who does not know that Islam has severely condemned and denounced idolatry in any shape or form? But who does not know as well that when once a party of Christians visited the Prophet at Medina and held a controversy with him on some points of doctrine in his mosque the time having arrived for them to say their prayers and they having prepared to go out of the mosque for that purpose, the Prophet offered them the same mosque to say their prayers. They placed their idols and the images of their gods before them and worshipped them and the Prophet, the greatest iconoclast and demolisher of idolatrous beliefs and practices that the world has produced, was himself a witness to all this. This offering by the Prophet of the mosque which was built for the worship of one true, Almighty God to the Christians to

adore and offer up their prayers to pieces of stones and the images of their saints and holy men is a fact demonstrative of the Prophet's great regard for even the ostensibly wrong and idolatrous beliefs of the followers of other faiths, sincerely and honestly held. His example in this respect which embodies his teaching and principles goes a very long way to remove and root out hate, acrimony and bitterness born of religious bigotry, narrow-mindedness and fanaticism.

## Limits set to Warfare

Another cause that leads to strife is that once a breach of peace takes place between two communities, they try to perpetuate it and keep to fan the fire of enmity. The Prophet by limiting the bounds of legitimate warfare has laid the axe at the root of this cause of disturbance and dislocation of the world's peace and tranquillity. The Quran says:

فان انتهوا فان الله غفور الرحيم-

"If and when the other belligerent party ceases fighting, lays down arms and seeks peace, it is forbidden to you to continue fighting because the seeking of peace by your opponents amounts to repentance on their part and God does not reject penitence but forgives and takes pity." Again it says:

فلا عدوان الا على الظالمين-

"Punishment is meted out only to those who trespass and transgress. But those who desist and refrain from making mischief and creating disturbance, their past transgressions should be overlooked and ignored and should not be made a pretext for chastising them."

## Freedom of Conscience

The eighth and perhaps the greatest favour that the Prophet conferred upon mankind was that he recognised, unequivocally and unreservedly, the principle of the freedom and inviolability of human conscience. All progress and advancement of science and knowledge, he realized, depended upon the liberty of man's convictions and actions. The key to all progress is that all doubtful problems should be investigated and all ideas and con-

victions based upon and our actions and deeds regulated in conformity with the decisions arrived at after so much close scrutiny and research. The Prophet was born at a time when the world attached no worth or value to the principle of the freedom of human conscience and among a people who were complete strangers to this most beautiful and attractive principle. At such a time and among such a people he proclaimed in the words of the Quran : لا اكراه فى الدين قد تبين الرشد من الغى " There shall be no compulsion in matters concerning one's faith, conviction and belief because with the coming of the Quran and the Prophet right has become distinct and manifest from wrong. The way to understanding by the help of arguments has been thrown open. The use of force, therefore, has become demonstrably improper."

Once a compromise was suggested to the Prophet by the Quresh *viz.*, the Prophet should begin to pay homage to their idols and they would worship Allah, the One God. Upon this came the following revelation to the Prophet لكم دينكم ولى دين *i e.*, " when I look upon your idols as utterly false and your worship of them quite foolish, how is it possible for me to sacrifice my conscience to win your approbation and when you are not convinced of the unity of God, how far is it proper and reasonable for you to worship Him. For you is your religion and for me mine."

## Rights of Women.

The ninth kind and beneficent act concerns the fair-sex. Before the Prophet's advent women were denied all rights and the status accorded to them in society and in the household was degraded in the extreme. They formed a part of the inheritance left by a dead person. The Prophet recognized, upheld and established women's rights. The Quran lays down ولهن مثل الذي عليهن بالمعروف *i.e.*, "For women there are rights over men as for men over women." The Prophet also declared that women would be heir to all those divine blessings and favours to which men would be entitled in after life. He fixed woman's share in the inheritance and recognized her right to private and personal possession of property. In such a cultured and civilized country as England, only 20 years ago women could not inherit

nor were they entitled to possess anything. But 1400 years ago the Prophet of Islam declared woman to be the sole, exclusive and undisputed master of her possessions and property over which her husband exercised no right whatever and from which he could take nothing without her consent and permission. In addition to her right in inheritance due recognition was accorded to her rights in the bringing-up of children, in making the obtaining of her consent obligatory before giving her in marriage, and in sundry other matters.

### Eradication of Superstitious Practices.

The Prophet's tenth kindness was his extermination of the superstitious beliefs and practices that were rampant in his time. Before his time all sorts of superstitions and the use of amulets and charms prevailed in Arabia and to take omen from the movements and voices of animals was very much in vogue. In fact superstitions and whimsical ideas held complete dominance over the minds of the people. When the so-called advanced and civilized countries were wallowing in the welter of superstitious beliefs and foolish ideas, the Prophet rising from among a primitive and uncivilized people and being himself totally illiterate and uneducated was fully successful in extirpating them. He succeeded in making his people realize that their foolish beliefs were not only debasing and degrading morally but were highly injurious to their intellectual growth and development. He told his people and through them the whole world that every event that took place in nature was governed by divine laws and that we should add to the stock of our knowledge by studying these laws. Such a study, he told us, will lead to the discovery of the cure of many a disease and would help us in our mental development and intellectual growth. It was a general belief, for instance, in his time that the movements of planets caused the fall of rain. The Prophet taught that whereas the planets and the stars cast their influences on the affairs of the world, it was entirely an erroneous view that they were quite independent of any Supreme Power Which governed and regulated their movements. They were one of the many means, he told us, which God had provided for us

by which to profit and benefit and it was foolish and unwise to base our activities on their motions and movements.

Similarly he strongly deprecated the taking of augury from the flights of birds such as crows and owls and laid great emphasis on the immutability of natural laws and exhorted his followers to strictly observe them as in their faithful and strict observance lay concealed all progress and advancement and their contravention meant failure and destruction. "You will find no alteration of God's laws", says the Quran.

One day the Prophet passed along a party of people who were engrafting date-trees. He enquired of them as to what they were doing in a way which was misunderstood by them to be a command to desist from doing it. They gave it up and the result was that the date-trees yielded a very poor harvest that year. They came to the Prophet and complained of the poor harvest. He replied that his question meant only an enquiry and implied no command to do this or that thing and said that they possessed a better knowledge of the things with which they were concerned. In the same way when on the day of the death of his son, Ibrahim, the sun happened to become eclipsed, his followers generally regarded it as a sign of celestial mourning and sympathy with the Prophet. He at once corrected them and explained to them that the eclipses were subject to the ordinary laws of nature and had nothing to do with the birth or death of any body.

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**Peace between Labour and Capital**

The Prophet's eleventh kind act was that he sought to bring about reconciliation and harmony between Labour and Capital. On the one hand he recognised private ownership because there is no spirit of competition and incentive to progress left without the recognition of this fact, on the other he recognised on principle the right of the poor in the wealth of the rich. The Quran says : "In the wealth of the rich, those who can and who cannot ask have a right." By the distribution of inheritance, the prohibition of the giving and taking of interest and by the institution of *Zakat*, Islam seeks to remove the great hiatus

between the excessive wealth of the rich and the extreme indigence and destitution of the poor.

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## Prohibition of Alcoholic Drinks

The last but not the least favour that the Prophet of Islam conferred on mankind was that he totally and strictly prohibited the use of alcoholic drinks. We need not dwell upon the material, moral and mental ravages that the drinking of wine wreaks. They have begun to be increasingly realized in all countries and among all classes of people and we hope and pray that the time may come very soon when the drinking of wine may be regarded as a deadly poison to be dreaded and eschewed.

Such was Muhammad, the Holy Prophet, humanity's greatest benefactor, the like of whom was never born and will never be born. God's choicest blessings be upon him !

*(Concluded)*

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# THE PROPHET'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCIENCE OF WAR

It is incomprehensible why the Muslim generals and commanders of armies could get so extremely few opportunities to shed light on Islamic history from their own particular angle of vision and thus deprived it of a very valuable addition. Whatever little knowledge we possess in this respect, we owe to the German Orientalists. But as they too did not have the invaluable benefit of the histories written by authors contemporary to the early Muslims, much less of the books written by specialists in this science, they had to remain content with what meagre knowledge they could gather from the general books of history; hence the material they had to rely upon was definitely very limited and scrappy. What very much adds to our regret is the fact that these German Orientalists, on account of their prejudice against the Holy Prophet, have preferred to omit altogether his time and the great and precious contribution made by him to the science of war and have only discussed and dilated upon the reigns of his successors and the Muslim monarchs who came afterwards.

A commander of an army is primarily connected with his army and the field of battle. By these two things can his true worth and ability be really judged. That is to say, to what extent and in what manner he has prepared the army for the work it is expected to do and what plans in regard to the movements of the army on the battlefield he has matured to ensure his success with the minimum of loss to his army and the complete discomfiture and annihilation of the enemy.

## Organisation of the Army

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As far as the question of the preparation of a regular army is concerned it should be kept in mind that the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) was born and lived at a time when military service was not regarded as a

respectable profession. Every member of a nation and every inhabitant of a country was considered to be a soldier responsible for the protection of the country to which he belonged. To serve as a paid soldier was, therefore, naturally looked upon as a culpable indifference towards a noble and sacred cause. The imperialist monarchs of Iran and Rome who took great pride in subjugating foreign nations were compelled to keep regular armies. But the soldiers working in the armies of these two countries were looked down upon for that very reason and were known and have been known till very recent past as mercenaries, *i.e.*, those who sell their lives in lieu of money. Their military officers belonged to the aristocratic classes. They were, therefore, considered as an integral part of the state and the salaries they received were not regarded as remuneration or recompense for their service in the army but only as a mark of their being regularly paid state servants. They were respected for their service of their country.

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**Methods in vogue in the remote past**

Countries, other than the Persian and Roman Empires, did not keep regular armies. At the time of war an appeal was made to the national sentiments of young men and thus they were persuaded to willingly offer their services or they were enlisted by conscription. These armies which were raised to serve a specific purpose and were not regularly paid had to be disbanded after that specific purpose was served. The military knowledge and experience gained by the soldiers in such armies could not, without proper training, be kept at a high level. Those nations which were less versed in the science of war than their warlike neighbours and were inferior to them in fighting capacity, in order to maintain their military experience and practice in fighting, popularised hunting, horse-races and pillaging and plundering, gambling and wine-bibbering among their peoples. Hunting was considered to make them brave and courageous, by horse-races it was sought to breed horses of good quality and species, by plunder and pillage warlike spirit was kept alive and nourished, by loot and murder, hardness of

heart and the killing of all feelings of compassion and mercy which were then considered the necessary qualifications of a good fighter, were developed and by popularising gambling and drinking of wine, carelessness and indifference towards consequences were created.

By these means and methods the spirit of war and sentiments of fighting, no doubt, were fostered and nourished but they killed nobler and finer human sentiments with the result that in every fight loot, murder and plunder were freely indulged in. The whole world presented the scene of a field of battle, red with the blood of the dead and dying.

### Methods adopted by the Prophet

Such was the state of affairs when the Holy Prophet was born. To-day the defence of a country is entrusted to a regular army and it is expected that when the army is regularly and properly paid, loot, plunder and pillage would greatly decrease and the regular salaries paid to the soldiers will go a long way to kill in them the inclination to loot and murder and the military training they get would obviate the necessity of creating feelings of barbarism and pitilessness among the soldiers. But in spite of the great progress made in the science of warfare, the use of wine is still encouraged in the armies because it makes a person completely careless of the consequences of what he does. It is actually served to the soldiers in some countries as a part of their ration.

The Holy Prophet did not adopt the plan of keeping a regular army for the defence of the country. He laid it down as a principle that no country is justified to attack or invade another country. The countries which follow this golden principle, have only to fight defensive wars. And when a country has to fight a powerful army, it becomes the national duty of every citizen of that country to give military service to defend it. So the Prophet laid it as a duty on every Muslim to fight in the defence of his motherland. But, as is said above, to prepare an army which should be able to effectively

defend the country at a given notice, formidable difficulties have to be overcome. And the means that have been adopted in the past to keep a whole country always fit and prepared to guard and protect its borders against sudden attacks do serve the immediate purpose but engender savagery and barbarity among its people and very much degrade its moral standard.

That the Holy Prophet was a commander of a rare ability and incomparable excellence is evident from the fact that while on the one hand he never lost sight of his exalted position as a Prophet of God and therefore left no avenue unexplored to raise his followers to the highest pinnacles of moral elevation, on the other, without keeping a properly and regularly paid army he kept his people always prepared to meet any exigency and created a well-organised army, quite versed in the science of war and able to successfully hold its own against very heavy odds. The following facts very clearly demonstrate that the Prophet was indeed a great commander—the greatest that the world has produced or will ever produce.

That the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) was a military genius of exceptionally rare qualities is incontestably proved by the following facts:—

(1) Drinking and gambling which have never ceased to be regarded as a good means to engender courage, fearlessness and bravery among soldiers, he abolished completely and outright. This abolition, on the one hand, put an end to barbarous practices prevalent among the ancients and on the other killed that intrepidity and entire disregard for consequences which indulgence in wine creates. It also killed among the Muslim soldiers that incentive to squander money which is born of gambling and which results in the destruction of steeds of excellent species and breed.

(2) He no doubt allowed hunting but positively forbade to regard and make it and other kindred purposeless avocations to be the main pursuit of one's life. He strictly enjoined upon the Muslims to make their lives useful and not to fritter them in silly, frivolous and aimless pursuits. Realizing that

a warlike spirit was the outcome of over-indulgence in these vocations he very wisely discouraged them and thus on the one hand he turned the attention of his people from paltry to serious affairs of life and on the other succeeded in weakening the spirit of fighting among them.

(3) He decisively prohibited plundering and in this way closed all avenues to that greed and barbarity which incite unpaid soldiers to start fighting without possessing any legitimate cause. During those ten years in which the Prophet combined in his person the dual capacity of the builder of a nation and that of the organiser and commander of an army, scores of battles took place. But not a single instance is on record when his soldiers were found to indulge in loot and plunder. The remarkable example of discipline and self-control displayed by his soldiers at the time of actual fighting is incomparable in human history. That an army whose all expenses and remuneration are met from the booty which it gains from its defeated and vanquished adversary should set such an example in restraint and should completely refrain from inflicting a loss of even a penny on the belligerent party while not in the actual state of fighting, is a thing which if and when occurs can never fail to extract liberal appreciation and evoke admiration. And this is precisely what the Prophet's armies when actually engaged in fighting did and this is how they behaved; and even his most implacable enemies have to acknowledge the miraculous transformation he had wrought among his followers. Booty, lawful and legitimately obtained as the result of fighting on the field of battle, falls under a different category and cannot honestly be cited as contravening the above-mentioned claim. Because to get hold of the property left by a defeated army has always been considered perfectly right and justified and even necessary. To effect a complete stoppage of the enemy's commerce by enforcing a blockade and to confiscate and take forcible possession of its merchandise with a view to shorten the duration of war is quite legitimate and cannot be called as loot or plunder. All the civilized nations have been doing it during the last Great War and it was never regarded as loot, nor can it be styled

as such in future. If the trade of the enemy is allowed to continue, a war once started between two nations would never see an end. In short, in spite of abolishing all those methods and means which were used and considered indispensable by the ancients to keep alive and nourish among their unpaid armies the spirit of war and fighting, the Holy Prophet succeeded in creating a disciplined, well-organised and powerful unpaid army which was always ready and quite fit to meet any emergency and fight any enemy. This fact, indeed, is a wonderful testimony of his remarkable qualities as an organiser and commander of armies. The methods adopted by him to bring about this great change were to the following effect:—

(*a*) He created among his followers a spirit of simplicity and made them used to spending their money to meet the needs of other people. In this way he got them inurred to a simple and hard life.

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(*b*) He engendered among the Muslims a republican feeling, the result of which was that every Muslim began to regard himself as a part of the State and looked upon the loss of its liberty and freedom as the loss of not only a particular community or party but as his own personal loss.

(*c*) He personally used to take part in all sorts of games and physical exercises and in the demonstrations of military feats and in this way was successful in making his people bold, brave and courageous and in creating in them a liking for military life.

(*d*) He had divided his country, for the purpose of organisation, into several units and every unit was under the direct supervision of a chief who was responsible to him for the military organisation of the people under his charge.

(*e*) He made separate arrangements for looking after and tending those wounded in the war. To Muslim women was entrusted this important duty. In this manner was secured the satisfaction of his soldiers that they would be properly looked after when wounded and disabled.

(*f*) He established a regular *bait-ul-mal*, from which were defrayed general expenses and monetary help was given to those who could not afford to take part in the war on their own account. Every Muslim, rich or poor, had to subscribe to the *bait-ul-mal* according to his means. Before his time there existed no regular institution analogous to that of *bait-ul-mal* in any country except in the Romans and Persian empires. Even their *bait-ul-mals* suffered from two very serious defects. Either they were looked upon as the personal possession of a single individual or body, or the poor classes were responsible for replenishing them. The wealthier classes did not subscribe to them. Among the nations other than the imperialist Romans and Persians there were no regular *bait-ul-mals* and the expenses of wars were met in no organised or regular way.

The institution of *bait-ul-mal* established by the Holy Prophet served many useful purposes, an important one of which was that the needs of the relatives and dependants of those killed in the wars were met from it. An obvious result of the establishment of this institution was that the soldiers went to the field of battle with the satisfaction and assurance that in case of their death, their dependants would be properly looked after. This feeling naturally considerably lessened the intensity of their hesitation to get themselves enrolled in the army which they must have felt in the absence of such a satisfaction.

(*g*) He made commissariat a regular state department though the principles enunciated by him in this connection could not be acted upon in his life-time because the *bait-ul-mal* was not yet established on a firm footing. During his time every soldier was expected to provide his food and clothing for himself but as it could not manifestly be possible for individuals to provide these things for themselves for a considerable length of time, he did not keep his armies in the battle-fields for a long time. His fights and expeditions were of very short duration and were undertaken not regularly but off and on. When a specific expedition had served its

purpose, it was not continued and the Muslims used to come back to their capital and waited for another occasion to show their prowess and religious zeal. But the Prophet laid down the principle for his followers to put into force when circumstances allowed after him, that the State was responsible for the ration of the army whether it was engaged in actual fighting or not because the very life of man depended upon food and it was the duty of the State to provide it. When in pursuance of the principle laid down by him, the *bait-ul-mal* was established on regular lines and reached its proper development, the State became responsible for the provision of food to the soldiers. Thus the foundations of the commissariat department which is now developed on very sound lines by civilized nations of modernity were laid by him.

To be brief, the result of that wonderful capacity for military leadership which the Holy Prophet possessed in a very large measure was that a handful of men who had received no education in warfare and had achieved no mentionable reputation in arms, under his training and supervision became so well-versed in military profession and had understood and mastered the technique and knowledge of war to such perfection that they inflicted defeat after defeat upon the greatest generals of their time, very often in circumstances highly favourable to their enemies. Thus we see that the corner-stone which was rejected by the builders, became the foundation stone of not only the Arabian Empire but of one of the most powerful and the first really republican government of the world. And he who was compelled to leave his dear native place in the dead of night, after the passage of only eight brief years, at the head of a very strong army of ten thousand holy men entered that very town as a victor and conqueror and captured it without shedding even a single drop of human blood.

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# FAKE SPIRITUALISM

By Maulvi Muhammad Din, Late Muslim Missionary in America

In our issue for March 1933 we promised to review *Spook Crooks*, a recent publication which deals with the tricks of fortune tellers and fake mediums. This is a book about swindlers who practice the most contemptible form of deception. Under the pseudonym of spiritualists who claim to receive messages from the other world they catch up people in trouble, and despoil them of their life's savings. In America alone it is computed that they catch up about thirty million people out of a population of one hundred and twenty million, that is about one in every four, and take away about 125 million dollars from them and leave in their trail suicide, dishonour, misery, and poverty. They take advantage of the misfortune of others, and wretches as they are, they trade upon the gullibility of the simple minded trusting folk who for one reason or other have the misfortune to fall into their traps.

This book explains how one can become a fake spirit medium, a fire-eater, ghost-walker, spirit photographer as well as spirit writer. It shows up a good many of the uncanny, weird tricks of the modern ' seers ' who under the garb of supernaturalism exploit the gullible public.

In laying bare the tricks of these crooks the author, we believe, has done a real service to his own country where these crooks flourish most. The Americans as a whole are despite G. B. S. a very intelligent, educated, and clever people, yet it is strange that of all the people in the world they are the most prone to fall easy victims to this vile trade. Of course superstition plays a great part in it, for superstition has found its way into the making of every one owing to the gradual rise of man from the darkness of ages, yet that the Americans should be the most ludicrous exhibits of it cannot be easily explained by the mere assertion that it is a war phenomenon. There is no doubt about the

fact that as an after-math of war belief in spiritualism increased through " mothers desiring ' messages ' from their sons who were killed in action." But its popular vogue is not merely due to unemployment which follows war driving thousands to fortune-tellers. If that were so, Europe shauld have been a more fertile field for it, for the war casualties in Europe were proportionately very much higher than in America, while rising unemployment in America dates only from the last three or four years, though Europe including the British Isles has suffered from it from the date of the conclusion of the Armistice.

We believe spiritualism arose as a protest against the rising tide of materialism which gathered strength in the early part of the nineteenth century. It was a natural reaction to the materialistic atheism which asserted its sway over the West. It was a punishment which nature inflicted on man's desire to regard money as the be-all and end-all of life. It was the nemesis that overtook the get-rich-quick peoples. Man forsook God and God forsook man in return. The Great War was but an exhibition of Divine vengeance. Every nation wanted to have the *good* of this life at the expense of others ; every people wanted to exploit those that were weaker than themselves. Hence the vengeance. We believe it is a great service to humanity to enlighten it and expose the hollowness of every thing that keeps it in bondage. But despite these warnings and exposures people in increasing numbers will go on playing the dupes of these crooks, fakers, cheats and tricksters which shows that the judgment of God is upon them, for seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear.

We believe the author has undertaken a very laudable task to expose these enemies of humanity and however benighted and stupid our generation might prove itself we feel it our duty to help in this pious and noble work. Hence if we briefly summarise in our own words the explanation of the tricks used by these fakes and the so-called spirit mediums we shall be doing our mite to help on the movement which is now on foot against such malpracticés.

Of course there are hundreds and thousands of tricks employed by these crooks. The ingenuity of a fertile brain bent upon devising evil is as inexhaustible as the genius inclined in about the opposite direction. It would be futile therefore to expect a summary of even a thousandth part of the major schemes. Hence we would just give a hint and a brief clue, summarise a few of these to give the reader an idea of what these spook crooks are after and what crooked methods are adopted by them. For a fairly comprehensive idea we would very gladly recommend the reader the study of *spook crooks* by Julien J. Pranskaur (Selwyn and Blount, 34 Paternoster Row, London, E. C. price 12/6 net) and other allied literature.

The author has examined fifteen of these infernal inventions and the means employed by these people to hoodwink the public and we propose to give a summary description of a few of them here to forearm any reader who may otherwise be unlucky enough to be taken in by these scoops. The most commonly used of these rackets is the "Great Buddha." Fortune tellers carry about a huge frame looking a life bust of Buddha. It is just a shell, "but it is so constructed that certain place when hit with a hammer or other heavy object, gives off the sound of solidity." This so called mystic *solid* Buddha is advertised as the teller of future. You are asked to drop your written inquiry into a bowl in the lap of this Buddha. This huge, ordinarily double the size of a man, frame accommodates an assistant in the inside who receives the messages dropped through the bowl into a basket lying by his feet. With the help of a *lamp* lighted by self-contained batteries all fixed up in the interior the assistant takes up the dropped messages, reads them aloud, talks to the microphone and with the help of a loud speaker adjusted in near the mouth of the Buddha broadcasts his reply. That is how the Buddha speaks. You will say that is a costly business, which is no doubt true, but then you can swindle a lot too. Hence the question of cost never arises. That is all into the bargain. Of course the Buddha cult, now much in vogue in the West, particulary in America, can be easily explained by the superstitious frame of mind

engendered by the Godless science and mammon worship. Great scientists would doubt the existence of the God of heavens and earth but they would readily fall in or rather be taken in by these fooleries. Ladies and gentlemen now carry about ivory, gold, or marble Buddha mascots and talismans and these carvings adorn the mantle-pieces and walls of the rich and fashionable along with nude pictures, the so-called works of art. Enough! we are not concerned with that now. These people have forsaken God Who has sent the Devil among them.

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Burned Message Reading is another way of deluding and defrauding the credulous. If yon can read a burnt message without so much as straightening the paper, why, you are in the eyes of the public gifted with 'psychic manifestation.' The dupe is asked, to write a question on a small piece of paper. He is asked to roll the paper into a small pellet, which is dropped into an envelope and sealed. The medium then walks up to the dupe, asks him to put the pellet in the prongs or grip of a pair of ordinary fire tongs and skilfully slids the envelope so as to get the pellet between the tight grips of the tongs which are then immediately thrust into a consuming and blazing fire reducing the envelope into mere ashes. The medium shakes off the ashes and instantly the lights are turned off. Then the medium happens to drop the tongs, thus giving him an opportunity to bend down and pick up the unconsumed pellet which is read by the aid of a small concealed flash-light while sitting across the table and a suitable message is immediately framed and given. That is how the spirits speak through the medium to the earth-bound.

Next comes Spirit Photography. These cheats are always on the look out for some unfortunate person who has had a sad bereavement in his or her family. They collect the necessary information about the deceased from some one in the know. Some stool pigeon is used to lure the unlucky mourner into the clutches of these devils. At first he is asked to write a message on a slip of paper and seal it in an envelope. Then he is asked to make over his pen and the coming of the spirits is announced with the dimming of the

lights. In the meantime the medium blubbers some nonsense, and then asks the date or other material information and feigns to write it on the envelope with a pen which the man does not or cannot suspect to be but his own. But it is really a substitute pen with a false top stuffed in with an alcohol soaked sponge. A few drops of this alcohol immediately permeate over the envelope, make it transparent to enable the practiced eye of the meduim to fairly take in the contents of the envelope. The alcohol being a volatile substance dries off immediately without leaving even a smudge or trace. The medium now being in possession of the contents of the envelope can easily suit his message from the other world. Having so far hooked the man in grief, it is easy now to get him on to spirit photography. Here of course a complex method is adopted which requires a skilful handling of the camera and its appurtenances for which we should specially recommend the reader to the pages of the book under review dealing with this topic. Suffice it to say that the picture of the dead man is somehow secured and reduplicated, enlarged or reduced according to plan which is then covered with a luminous paint of calcuim sulphide which becomes radiant on exposure to light.

Again there is clique of frauds who style themselves as *the sun worshippers.* They proclaim immunity from fire and flame. But there is nothing mystic or psychic about it. It is all a question of a few chemical mixtures. For instance to make impervious any part of ones body one should use the following prescription. Dissolve one half ounce of camphor in two ounces of aquavitae, shake well and then add one ounce of quick-silver and one ounce, of styrax and two ounces of pulverised red stone. Shake well until there is no sediment. Let it stand for twelve hours. To stand the fire test rub the mixture on the parts of the body to be subjected to the flames or hot iron. Many mediums rub the solution on the soles of their feet and walk over burning hot coals, stones, or iron grates under which a vicious fire is burniug.

Regarding the hair there is another prescription. Take a

tea-cup. Dissolve ordinary table salt to the saturating point. In another cup dissolve a capacity table spoon of borax washing-soda in warm water. Mix the two in bottle. The hair soaked, dried, and combed to remove all signs of this special preparation dressing is ready for the test.

As to "ectoplasin" that is the foam gushing form the mouth of the medium the device is very simple. A little bit of soap in the mouth, the sliva rubbed against the tongue produces lather.

Next we come to the Table Rapping and Table Rising. Of course with the performance of unearthly rites and wind music the superstitious victim is keyed up. With the dimming of the lights a sort of uncanny atmosphere is created with the result that the victim thinks that the raps come out of the table while as a matter of fact the medium uses a bottom heel and hammer arrangement with a string running up the leg and attached to a garter.

The table rising effect is another old stunt fake mediums usually make of table rapping and table lifting. "By concealing a knife in the sleeve of his coat if the meduim is a man, or in the sleeves of her blouse, if she is a woman, it can be done." "The table ordinarily used is a light one. The knife is slid under the table edge with hands on the table which can be moved up or down at will."

'Fire eating' or 'drinking burning oil' too are easily understandable. According to Gibson 'the first and foremost principle is that the mouth when filled with sliva, becomes almost fire-proof of its own accord, and strange as it may seem, can stand heat that the hand cannot.' "In 'swallowing' burning oil, the performer does not ladle up liquid but merely lets the surface of spoon become wet.' While he is slowly lifting the spoon to his mouth the few drops sticking on will burn themselves out. Last of all with the putting in of the spoon he will puff out a breath to put out anything that is still burning and close the mouth. Of course novices get bad burns at first, but they get used y and by. The eating of red-hot charcoal can also be mastere.

Of course all we need is the practised eye. Along with the pieces of burning charcoal in the brazier " are a few coals of white pine which when burnt look exactly like charcoal. They will not burn the mouth as will charcoal. Charcoal becomes brittle but not the white pine which can be felt with a fork or a picker. Others employ small balls of burnt cotton in a dish of burning alcohol. " When lifted on the fork they have the appearance of charcoal but are absolutely harmless if the mouth is closed immediately, shutting off the air, and of course, extinguishing the flame."

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There is a special device for drinking of molten lead. Have a double handled spoon. Pour a little quantity of bazaar mercury into the handle. Exhibit the empty spoon with handle tilted towards you. When you dip the spoon in the molten metal turn the handle down, the quick silver runs out into the spoon which you put in your mouth and not the molten metal. With a few precautions this sleight of hand is easily manageable.

It would be a tiresome business to summarise the details of the tricks employed by these people, for which we would recommend the book in review wherein one can profitably study the various chapters dealing with the life histories and historic cases of some of these crooks. They are well worth the study of a man who is interested in the study of human psychology and psychiatry. To what lengths can the so-called material civilisation corrupt the mentality of people who claim to carry the white man's burden on their shoulders is writ large on every page of the book. Again it is needless on our part to summarize all the other chapters dealing with **Fake Medium Post, Bunking Brokers, Spirit Slates, man who can not die,** and **the dead do not speak.** The whole book as a matter of fact is written in the racy manly American style. The only defect that I can see from the Indian point of view is that the price is a bit steep for the ordinary Indian pocket.

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# ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

*(By Mr. F. R. Hakeem, Ahmadi Muslim Missionary to West Africa)*

Of the five British West African Colonies I have had the chance to visit three —Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria. I have met a great many Muslims here and will try to give an eye-witness account of their social, moral, educational and religious conditions in the following lines. The number of Muslims in Nigeria is greater than in Sierra Leone and Gold Coast put together. Sierra Leone comes next to Nigeria and Gold Coast has only a few thousands of them.

Socially, they are all on the same level in all the three colonies. They belong to different tribes and clans and each tribe has a chief of its own who is generally the oldest man in the family. This office is more or less hereditary but sometimes quite independent elections are also made. The hereditary system is not as we generally see in India —from father to son —but in West Africa it is generally the nephew who inherits his uncle. Son, they say, being from the seed of a man who had no connection with the family before his marriage has no right to take possession of the belongings of a man.

In Northern Nigeria and certain parts of Sierra Leone there are some Muslim states with Amirs as there Heads. The system of their rule is quite the same as it existed in the time of the great Muslim Emperors in the past, and until quite recently they punished their criminals according to the Muslim jurisprudence. But gradually the British Residents appointed to these states prevailed upon these Amirs and the form of their tribunals was changed, more are less, according to British Courts of Justice.

With respect to their inter-state relations it is a matter for pleasure that the various states are quite friendly towards each other and the idea of Islamic brotherhood exists in them to a remarkable degree.

I. They hate the modren European dress and prefer their own *pagri*, *salvar* and loose gown to the modern hat, trousers and petticoat. Of course the Islamic greeting of ***Assalam-o-Alaikum*** has given way to the European *Good Morning*, ect.

II. It is a thousand pities that the Muslims of West Africa morally do not represent true type of a good Muslim. They possess an excellent moral code in the Quran and the *Sunnat* of their Great Prophet—on whom be Peace and the Blessings of God—but in practice they could be compared to themselves alone. Stealing and telling lies and swearing of false oaths are very common among them. They know no such thing as the fulfilment of promise. On the other hand they are very hospitable and treat their guests very kindly. And though they at once become your bloodthirsty enemies if you offend them, but if they once be your friends they will give even their life and all for your sake. In this respect they are like the Arabs.

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Drinking of wine and the use of other intoxicants prevails among them. The efforts of their *Sheikhs* to stop this evil have failed just as those of the Christian Missionary from stopping it from the Christian community. But, thank goodness, by the advent of the Ahmadi misssionaries in this country a marked improvement has taken place and more than 70 per cent. of them have said farewell to this evil habit—a very commendable service to humanity indeed !

III. Educationally, Muslims of West Africa are not so advanced as their Christain neighbours. It is no doubt due much to the antipathy towards knowledge of the people and also to the decree of the ***Mullahs*** that the learning of the English language is synonymous with becoming a ***Kafir*** but the Government, too, did not make any definite provision for that. There are numerous Christain Mission Schools in the country but Muslim children could not be sent to them for fear of their turning Christian and there are no Government schools to which children could be sent by Muslim parents with any such fears. About two decades ago the Government of Sierra Leone was

able to open some Government Muhammadan schools and some intelligent and shrewd people taking advantage of them got their children trained. It is due to those schools that to-day we find some Muslim youths occupying such important positions as Registrars and Chief Clerks of High Courts in Sierra Leone.

Next comes Nigeria. The Government of that Colony, too following the example of the Government of Sierra Leone opened some Government Muhammadan schools of which some people took advantage. But really speaking the people of these countries did not pay much intention to these educational institutions and did not derive proper benefit from the opportunities offered to them and hence the Governments of both the Colonies were compelled to close down these schools. But now with the advent of the missionaries of the Ahmadiyya movement in these countries Muslim Schools have begun to be opened in various towns where children can learn Muslim theology side by side with secular education and the people have become encouraged to acquire knowledge so much so that it is through the influence of these missionaries only that for the first time in the history of British West Africa Mualim young men have gone to Europe to study Law and are now practising as full-fledged barristers in High Courts. They have also gone to Europe to learn Medicine and other arts and sciences and also to Al-Azhar for higher education in Arabic. And it is to be hoped that the day is not very far when the Muslims of that dark continent will realize, to its fullest extent the true significance and importance of the Prophet's injunction about the acquisition of knowledge " from the cradle to the grave."

IV. Religiously, I am sorry to say, the West African Muslim will disappoint any one who will cast a glance on him to see anything of Islam in him. I confess there are *Sheikhs* among them and they spare no effort to reform them ; but their efforts are not rewarded with success. Religion, so to say, has its hold on the West African Muslim's mind. In all the three colonies mentioned above they profess to be the followers of Imam Malik, but in practice they are no better than heathens,

Instead of seeking God in the right manner, through prayer and fasting, etc., they seek Him by practising charms and wearing amulets.

Allah is their God in theory only, but really the Muslims in those parts believe in fetish and *Juju* and worship the spirits of their ancestors as they used to do in their days of paganism. Due to their fetish and black-magic worship they are very suspicious of each other, and quarrels often arise among them with the result that they poison their neighbours and former friends by some secret medicine. Their all-round condition is very deplorable indeed !

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# Islam's Capacity for Uniting different Cultures

But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity. It stands after all nearer to the real East than Europe does, and it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and co-operation. No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Moslem communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Moslem communities in China and the still smaller community in Japan show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and the West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced in its relations with the East. If they unite, the hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced—but if Europe, by rejecting the co-operation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals, the issue can only be disastrous for both.

*—Professor H. A. R. Gibb.*

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# RELIGION AND ART

(BY NINA A. STAUFFER, AN AMERICAN MUSLIM CONVERT)

Religion has always found a place in the life of the human race. No tribe has ever been found who did not have some form of spiritual worship. It has been this dominant influence which has brought man from the depths of darkness and superstition to the light of civilization, it has also been this constant search for something better and nobler in his existence which has led him to give birth to his creative fancies, through the medium of the arts.

Poetry, music, architecture, in fact all art has been the direct outgrowth of deep and beautiful thoughts. If it were possible to trace the thoughts to their origin, one would, no doubt, find them embedded in some religious background; prompted by some spiritual motive; for the museums and art galleries contain rare pieces of statuary, paintings and other treasures which are expressions of religious fervor. Every anthropological research party finds traces of some form of crude art, even among the most primitive tribes. When the races raised their standards of living to a higher plane, the evidence that a finer art was developed, is also found. Relics of early Indian life in America would not be complete without the ornate handiwork of those primitive days. The poetry and the music of the Indian has been preserved by white men who lived among them and later gave their songs and rhythms to the world. Naturally, one interprets the wildness of the primitive life in the Indian songs and music, but there is always a hint that the "Great Spirit" is hovering near, ready to protect them from all evil.

However, the religious element is found, not only in the art of the early American Indian, but it is also found among other primitive tribes, who have devoted their best handiwork

in behalf of the clothing, totem poles, head-dresses and other objects to be used in their religious ceremonials.

The pagan gods inspired the Ancient Greeks and Romans to give to the world a classical art which has lived long after both civilizations have become only pages in history. After all other evidences have been effaced, the religion of each period of the development of the human race has been preserved through the art treasures left behind.

Nevertheless, it is often argued that religion was not an influential factor in the creative art world. It was only used as subject matter because the great majority of people were interested in the spiritual life. Is it possible that Bach, one of the greatest musical composers who ever lived could have spent so much time in the church, and could have written so many compositions for the church service without having had some spiritual motive? Is it not logical to assume that during those prayerful hours in the church his thoughts could free themselves from the sordid reality of the world and could delve into a divine creation?

The "Inferno" written by Dante when Europe was beginning to awaken from its medieval slumber must have been an answer to a question which had haunted his mind. Likewise, "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" probably solved some problem which the blind Milton had perceived through his Puritanical training. Would Michael Angelo have selected religious subjects and traced those divine thoughts in form and colour on a bit of canvas, if he were not vitally interested in the underlying idea which prompted the creation of his composition? Is it not also true that the other Florentine painters as well as the noted Flemish artists left masterpieces devoted to the spiritual life? Did it just happen that some of the best Gothic architecture is seen in the European cathedrals? Is it just an incident that the Ancient Greeks and Romans used their finest architectural style in their temples of worship? Does not one observe the Mohammedan religion revealed in the mosque architecture? So it is throughout the world that every country has some religious temple of beauty to display.

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It is generally supposed that the average lay mind cannot understand a great artistic masterpiece unless it is first interpreted by a person who has made a thorough study of it. An untrained person would not attempt to execute a Bach "Chorale," and only a student of literature would attempt to interpret "Paradise Lost", yet, the world recognizes them as supreme creations in the art world. However, if anything new in art is produced the public looks askance at it and regards it with suspicion before the world will accept it and give it its rightful place. Many years may pass before the new is recognized, and at that time the world will have progressed enough for the lay mind to sense the significance and meaning of this forgotten creation.

So it is with religion. People have become so accustomed to the old dogmas, even though they have outlived their usefulness, that they do not like to habituate themselves to anything different. They do not understand the new doctrine, and perhaps, there is no one to explain it to them, hence through their lack of knowledge they are likely to condemn the unknown. Whenever a religious teacher attempts to introduce dissimilar belief to the people, he immediately feels a great resistance towards his teachings.

Islam, the religious torch which is trying to brighten the western world, is meeting these obstacles. Thirteen hundred and fifty years have elapsad since Muhammad gave his message to the world through the Arabian people. Though for centuries, Asia, Africa and a considerable part of Europe have been uplifted by this noble faith, comparatively few people in America are acquainted with its sublime teachings. Yet during the short time since it was introduced in this country, it has achieved a great measure of success, and is on its rapid way to the attainment of its ultimate goal. Through its dynamic spiritual force the Holy Quran will eventually cast its dominant influence westward just as it has done for many centuries in the Orient.

# SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Questions

(*a*) What is the true and real way to worship God ?
(*b*) Can man by worshipping God see Him ?
(*c*) Is there only one way to attain to God or different ?

## Answers

This is a prevailing misconception that because God's powers are unlimited and He is Immanent, therefore, we can see Him from wherever we please and to substantiate this misconception the example of the Himalayas which is a very big thing is given. But to present the instance of the Himalayas in support of the contention that everything which occupies a large space must necessarily be capable of being seen and reached from different directions is a manifest mistake. The Himalayas is a material thing, and a material thing cannot in this respect be compared to a Spiritual Being. True it is that Truth is very extensive but to reach it we must adopt the means and methods by ignoring which we are capable of being led astray. God is the fountain-head of all truths and in His person are to be found all beauties and excellences. But He cannot be reached by saying and repeating one *wazeefa* (incantation). One prescription or medicine cannot cure all sorts of diseases. In the same manner He Who is the source of all beauties cannot be attained to unless sought by applying all methods and all truths and the combination of all truths is what is called Religion. Religion gives us the knowledge of God's attributes and guides us as to how we should behave towards our fellow-beings. Evidently it is no one *wird* or *wazeefa*. Religion is a combination of many *wirds*. A *wird* is only a part of truth, not the whole truth. Religion is the whole truth, the complete truth.

It can, no doubt, be said, that there are extant in the world religions without limit and number. It becomes difficult for the

seeker after truth to adopt a particular religion and follow a particular faith. But all religions and all faiths cannot claim to be, and are not, true. The searcher for guidance should seek out true religion and follow it. The true religion gives its followers an unshakable belief, an invincible certainty. There should be and there are tests and criteria by which the truth of a true religion is tested and found out. Before we endeavour to find out the true religion we should first satisfy ourselves as to why at all we should search for a religion and what is the object and purpose of religion. If it be said that its object is to earn wealth, then we see that those who jeer most at religion and all that it stands for and ridicule even the idea of God are wealthy It is evident from it that the purpose of religion is quite different from earning wealth. Let us see what religion is and what it stands for.

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According to Islam religion means a way, and a way is meant to be followed to reach a certain destination. Religion takes us to a place to reach where there is no other method, means or way.

There is implanted in the nature of man a love for and an irresistible hankering after a Supreme Being. Even those worldly people who generally remain wholly engrossed in the pursuit of their mundane affairs, when off their avocations, feel an inward urge to seek that Supreme Being and establish connection with Him. If Light is created to help the eye to see things, beautiful objects have been created for man to see. If air is created to help the ears to hear things, God has created sweet voices for man to hear. And if hand is endowed with the faculty of touch, there are things created for it to grasp and likewise we find things to satisfy the tasting faculty of the tongue. When things have been created to satisfy all our inborn faculties it seems incongruent, untenable and incomprehensible that there should be ingrained in human nature a desire to be united with a Higher Being and there should exist no such Being. The fact that such a desire, such a hankering and thirst exists in human soul is proof incontrovertible of the fact that there certainly is a Being union with Whom can alone satisfy that thirst of the soul.

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Different religions have given different names to this Being. The Mnslims call Him by the beautiful name of Allah. So the object and purpose of religion is that we should find out God and become united with Him. When the aim and object of religion is proved—to help man to seek God and become at one with Him—we can quite easily test and find out the truth of so many religions before us by seeing which of them really assists us to realize God and become united with Him. But before applying this test we shall have to keep this fact in view that personal experience comes only after intelligence. Intelligence has precedence over experience. In our worldly affairs we have touchstones and standards by which the ability and attainments of a person are tested. When we wish to employ in our service an educated man we see his university certificates and these tell us as to what standard he is educated. In life we have standards to measure the value of every thing. There must be, and there are, standards by which the value and weight of different religions can be assessed. The first and foremost of these standards to test the worth of a particular religion is our intelligence. That religion which can satisfy our intellect or can produce an example of one or more persons who attained to real and complete union with God can be of any use for us and can reasonably claim our adherence and reverence. Of the religions which claim to establish man's relation with God Islam and Christianity are most prominent. Arya Samaj, Hinduism and Budhism do not believe in such union.

At this stage we have also to consider what is meant by "becoming united with God and realizing Him." Some people look upon God as a tangible thing. If He is material, our physical eyes can discern Him. But if He is not so then He is not susceptible of being seen by a person neither when he is awake nor when he is asleep, nor in dream or vi ion. Because in sleep we can see only those things which we know in life and our powers and faculties in sleep are the same as when we are awake. Therefore the sights we see in dreams are in reality seen by our these physical eyes. We cannot see in a dream the taste of a thing—of mangoe, for instance—as we cannot see it when awake. Exactly in the same manner we cannot see God

in dream as we cannot see Him when we are in full possession of our senses in a state of wakefulness. In dream and vision we do not see the real and actual things. We see only their similitudes and likenesses. We do sometimes see things flying in dreams which do not fly in actual life, but that is because the act of flying exists in the world. But that thing will never be found to exist in dreams which does not exist in the world in any shape or form. *Fakirs* or *Yogis* are sometimes successful in showing sights to persons of excitable natures, but that is what can be effected by mesmeric practices by any person adept in them belonging to any religion. Mesmerism and auto-suggestion have nothing to do with Religion. They belong to the realm of matter and can be acquired by practice. By showing sights of the above nature the *Fakirs* and *Yogis* wish to impress upon the minds of the victims of their hypnotic practices that they had found out God and realized Him. But that is only a misconception, and instead of helping a person to see God it takes him away from Him and distracts his attention from his noble and sacred aim and object. God is infinite. He is limitless, therefore beyond human comprehension. We cannot see Him. We can see only His spiritual likeness. Sometimes a seeker after God is deceived by seeing a spiritual sight into believing that he has seen God. But just as we do not and cannot see warmth but we benefit by it and just as we do not and cannot see electricity but we derive great advantages from the light it produces, similarly God is known by His manifestations. When He manifests Himself in a certain way and in a certain person we are satisfied that He *is*.

It is essential for a religion which claims to be true or the only true faith that it should give us substantial and incontrovertible proofs and evidences that God exists and that we can attain to a real and actual union with Him. Not only this but it should give us the instances of persons who by acting upon it should have established such a connection with Him in this very life. To find out that God exists and that we can realize Him and become united with Him in the life beyond the unseen is good for nothing for those of this world. Because if

a person continues to tread on the wrong path and after his death he found out that he was on the wrong track, that knowledge will be of no use to him because the actions of a person end with this life and the other life is the life of retribution and reward. It is, therefore, quite necessary that we should be perfectly convinced in this world that we can attain to God.

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# NOTES ON THE HOLY QUR-AN

The army of Pharaoh continued their persuit, but the water of the sea returned after the Israelites had safely crossed it ; and as a result the Egyptians were drowned. In order to understand the true import of this incident, it should be kept in view that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, a miracle is purely the work of God and that man has no hand in it. So, the raising of the rod and striking the sea on the part of Moses was by way of a sign, having nothing whatever to do with the parting of the sea.

Similarly, it should also be borne in mind that the words of the Holy Qur-ān do not lend themselves to the erroneous inference that there was an actual split in the sea to afford a passage for Moses. The two words used in the Holy Qur-ān in this connection are *faraqna* and *infalaqa*, the root idea of both being 'parting'. So what we can learn from the Holy Qur-ān about this story is, that when the Israelites were to cross the sea, it parted or, what is the same thing, receded from the shore, land becoming visible; and the Israelites went on their way. Such occurrences are not rare on the sea-shore, the part of the Red Sea crossed by the Israelites being also subject to this phenomenon.

In Abbot's Life of Napoleon, it is related that "one day, with quite a retinue, he (Napoleon) made an excursion to that identical point of the Red Sea which, as tradition reports, the children of Israel crossed three thousand years ago. The tide was out, and he passed over the Asiatic shore upon extended flats. Various objects of interest engrossed his attention until late in the afternoon, when he commenced his return. The twilight faded away and darkness came rapidly on. The party lost their path, and, as they were wandering bewildered among the sands, the rapidly returning tide surrounded them. The darkness of the night increased, and the horses floundered deeper and deeper in the

rising waves. The water reached the girths of the saddles, and dashed upon the feet of the riders, and destruction seemed inevitable. From that perilous position Napoleon extricated himself by that presence of mind and promptness of decision which seemed never to fail him. The horses did not reach the shore until midnight, when they were wading breast deep in the swelling waves. The tide rises on that part of the coast to the height of 22 feet. 'Had I perished in that manner like Pharaoh', said Napoleon, 'it would have furnished all the preachers in Christendom with a magnificent text against me'."

What constitutes a miracle in the escape of the Israelites is that God so arranged matters that they reached the sea-shore at the time of ebb-tide, and just when Moses uplifted the rod, water began to recede; but when the army of Pharaoh began to cross the sea, they met with unusual obstacles which greatly retarded their progress and thus, while they were yet in the midst of the sea, the tide flowed and they were drowned to a man. This view is further borne out by the Holy Qur-ān in the words: "(when the water receded,) every part was like a huge sand-hill" (XXVI, 64.) It is clear that the word *kull*, (every) which refers to more than two, would not have been used, if the spliting of the sea had been the idea to be expressed. This word leaves no room for doubt that according to the Holy Qur-ān, the sea was not divided into two parts, but it only flowed back from the shore. As is the case in such seas as have depressions full of water, these depressions remained full of water even after the tide had flowed back, and looked like petty lakes in the midst of dry land when the sea had retreated. The map of the Red Sea shows near the shore a number of small lakes which were more numerous in old times, as the maps of those days clearly indicate. So, when the Israelites were passing, they had the sea on one side, and the small lakes on the other, which conformably to the natural laws of perspective, appeared raised above the level of the land.

The fact that Pharaoh followed Moses clearly indicates that it was the time of ebb-tide. If the sea had been split miraculously, he would never have ventured to follow in the wake of Moses.

واذ واعدنا موسى اربعين ليلة ثم اتخذتم العجل من بعده وانتم ظلمون۔

*52. Wa idh wā'adnā Mūsā arba'īna lailatan, thum-mattakhadhtumul'ijla mim-ba'dihī wa antum zālimūn.*

52. And *remember* when We made to Moses a promise of forty nights, then you made the calf behind him and you were transgressors.

65. (*a*) In Ch. VII, 143, the Holy Qur-ān tells us that at first the appointed duration was thirty nights, but by the subsequent addition of 10 nights, the period was extended to 40 nights. This favour was granted to Moses because of his faithfulness and sincerity. We may, therefore, infer that God does not let the sincerity of His servants go unrewarded.

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(*b*) Man is the slave of his environments. He gradually imitates and assimilates the views of the people among whom he happens to live, move and have his being. This is specially true of a subject people, who assiduously imitate the manners and customs of the rulers. The Israelites lived under the Pharaohs for a long time, and naturally came to imbibe the faith of the Egyptians, particularly of the ruling Pharaohs. When they, the Israelites, left Egypt with Moses, on the way, wherever they came across any idol-worshipping people, they requested Moses to sanction for them worship of similar idols (VII, 139). So eager were they for such worship that when Moses went to Mount Sinai, they found time to make a calf for their idol, and took to worshipping it. They preferred the worship of the calf, because they saw in Egypt that the cow was held there in special veneration. Egypt, like India, was an agricultural country where the cattle must, of course, be of the highest good to men, and hence the worship of the cow.

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It has been alleged in Ex. XXXII, 1—6, that it was Aaron who made a calf for the Israelites. But the Holy Qur-ān acquits him of the charge. It says :—" And Aaron had said to them before, ' O my people, you have only been tried thereby ; and surely, your Lord is the Beneficent ; follow me, therefore, and obey my bidding. " (XX : 91.) It is indeed strange that such incredible stories as the participation of Aaron in calf-worship should find place in a book which claims to be inspired. The fact is that the Bible has unfortunately been a prey to human interference. The very fact that it calumniates the chosen ones of God proves that the text of the Bible has become corrupt. It is the height of absurdity to believe even for a moment that a prophet who holds personal communion with God can even think of ascribing divine attributes to an idol, or, through fear of men, give expression to views unworthy of God. It is probable that some interested people had interpolated the sacred writings and ascribed certain vices to the prophets ; and the Christian divines subsequently took them for granted, as they were of great use to them as a means of the exaltation of Jesus over the rest of the prophets.

ثم عفونا عنكم من بعد ذالك لعلكم تشكرون۔

*53. Thumma 'afaunā 'ankum-mim ba'di dhālika l'allakum tashkurūn.*

53. Then We forgave you thereafter, that you might be grateful.

66. We learn from Ex. XXXII, 9, 10 that the worship of the calf called forth the wrath of God, whereupon Moses prayed to God for them and then, in the words of the Old Testament, ' The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.' (Ex. XXX II, 14.) It may be noted that the Holy Qur-ān used the word ' forgave ' instead of ' repented,' as used in the Bible, for the latter word is not appropriate to God's majesty.

واذ آتينا موسى الكتاب والفرقان لعلكم تهتدون۔

*54. Wa idh ātainā Mūsal-kitāba wal-furqān, la'allakum tahtadūn.*

54. And *remember* when We gave Moses the scripture and the discrimination, that you might be guided.

67. (*a*) Here the word *kitāb* (translated above as 'scripture') is used for the 'tables' on which the Ten Commandments were written. The word bears the following various significations:—(1) In the *Tāj-ul-'Arūs*, Vol. I, the word has been defined as 'a thing in which or on which one writes.' (2) 'a book'. (3) 'an obligation' or 'a commandment.' The verb-form of this word has been used in this sense in Ch. II, 184: "The fast is made obligatory upon you as it was made obligatory upon those before you." (4) 'an epistle' (*vide* Ch. XXVII, 30.) We learn from Ch. VII, 146, 151 and 155 that it was only the tables and not the Pentateuch that were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and as the word *kitāb* does not necessarily mean a book, but any thing on which something isrwtiɪe, n it is clear that the word *kitāb* here refers, not to the Pentateuch, but to the Ten Commandments that were written on the tablets.

(*b*) *Furqān* (discrimination) is not derived from Syriac, as alleged by certain writers. It is an Arabic word derived from *farq*; and the Arabic language abounds in words derived from the same root, which are commonly met with in pre-Islamic literature of Arabia.

The root meaning of the word *Furqān*, as we learn from the *Tāj-ul-'Arus* (Vol. VII, pp. 43 and 45) is 'to differentiate', 'to separate', 'to sift,' and hence *Furqān* is applied to that which differentiates between truth and falsehood, between reasoning and fallacy. *Furqān* also means 'argument' because it serves to discriminate between the true and the false. "Morning" is also termed *Furqān*, because it separates night from day. It also means 'aid'

or 'support,' because the man helped and supported is distinguished from those against whom he receives assistance. Thus, the verse means that God helped Moses against his adversaries, or taught him reasons and arguments, or brought about such events as led to discrimination between truth and falsehood : for instance, the episode of calf-worship, which brought to light truth as distinct from falsehood and separated the true from the untrue. According to the Holy Qur-ān, *Furqān* is not the name of any particular object ; but every sign and every sort of divine assistance, every agent discriminating truth from untruth, and every argument or reason which serves the same purpose, is called *Furqān* in the language of the Holy Qur-ān. The day on which the battle of Badr was fought is called *Yaumul Furqān* or the Day of Discrimination," because on that day God caused truth tobe *distinguished* from untruth, and *assisted* the Muslims against their opponents.

واذ قال موسى لقومه ياقوم انكم ظلمتم انفسكم باتخاذ كم العجل فتوبوا الى بارئكم
فاقتلوا انفسكم ذالكم خيرلكم عند بارئكم فتاب عليكم انه هوالتواب الرحيم-

*55. Wa idh qāla Mūsā li-qaumihī, yā qaumi, inna-kum zalamtum anfusa-kum bittikhādhi-kumul'-'ijla fatūbū ilā Bāri'i-kum, faqtulú anfusa-kum ; dhālikum khairul-lakum 'inda Bāri'i-kum fa-tāba 'alaikum ; inna-hū huwat-Tauwwābur-Raḥīm.*

55. And *remember* when Moses said to his people : 'O my people, surely you have been unjust to yourselves by making the calf ; turn ye, therefore, to your Creator, and slay your brethren ; that is best for you with your Creator. So He accepted their repentance ; surely, He is the compassionate, the merciful.

68. (*a*) It appears from this verse that a general pardon was granted to the Israelites ; but it was essential to punish the ringleaders. They were, therefore, ordered to be slain. *Faqtulú anfusa-kum* does not mean *slay your ownselves*, but it means *slay some of your kith and kin.*

The latter meaning is borne out by verse 85 of this chapter, where God says, "and you shall not turn yourselves (*i. e.* your brethren) out of your houses." Similarly in Ch. IX, 36: "So do not wrong yourselves (*i. e.* your own people) therein" Again in Ch. XXIV, 62, we read:—"And when you enter houses, salute your brethren." In all these verses *anfusa-kum* (your own selves) has been used in the sense of 'your brethren.' Speaking of this incident, the Bible says:—"Put ye every man his sword upon his thigh, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." (Ex. XXX II, 27, 28.)

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In the above passage, the number of slain has been put at three thousand, but this is an error. This is apparent from the fact that the number of Israelites who came out of Egypt is represented as 6 hundred thousand. Now such a large number could not live there as servants and labourers. The Egyptians also speak of them as "a small party." (The Holy Qur-ān, XXVI, 55.) The error has arisen through a confusion of the words *ilf* and *alf*, the former meaning 'a family,' and the latter 'a thousand.' Really there were only 600 families of Israelites living in Egypt, but they were misconstrued into 600 thousands. Similarly, the number of slain also was not three thousand; there were only three families, the leaders of which took part in the setting up of the calf as an idol for worship, and they were put to death by their own kinsmen at the bidding of Moses.

(*b*) *Faqtulú anfusa-kum* (slay yourselves) has also been construed as 'annihilate your desires'—an interpretation borne out by the usage of the Arabic language. Some commentators prefer this interpretation to the one given above on the ground that the Israelites having been

forgiven by God at the intercession of Moses, the latter could not order them to slay their brethren, for such an order would have been incompatible with the forgiveness granted to the Israelites. In connection with this, it must be remembered that God had decided to destroy the whole people, and God's forgiveness lay in the fact that the whole people were spared from destruction. The ring-leaders were, however, punished with death, but they were preserved from punishment in the life to come as a result of Moses' intercession.

(*c*) *Fa-túbù ilā bāri'ikum* (Turn ye therefore to your Creator). *Bāri'* (Creator) means one who forms or fashions by cutting; one who shapes out or pares. The word *Bari'* is to be distinguished from *Khāliq*. The latter means one who brings into existence according to the proper measure, or one who brings into existence from a state of non-existence, while the former signifies the fashioning of a thing which was unfinished into its proper shape. Generally, *Bari'* is used as synonymous with *Khāliq*, for the formation of a shape is the result in each case. "To fashion a man means to bring about a reformation in him, and to free him from defects." Hence the exhortation to the Israelites to turn to their 'fashioner' (*Bāri'*) meant that they should work a reformation in themselves.

وإذ قلتم يا موسى لن نؤمن لك حتى نرى الله جهرة فاخذتكم الصعقة وانتم تنظرون۔

*56. Wa idh qultum, yā-músā lannu'mina la-ka, ḥattā narallāha jahratan, fa-akhadhat-kumuṣ-ṣā'iqatu wa antum tanzurún.*

56. And *remember* when you said; O Moses, we will by no means believe thee until we see Allah face to face; then the thunderbolt overtook you, while you gazed.

69. *Ṣā'iqah* (the thunderbolt) signifies, 1. Death; 2. Swoon (*Mufridāt-Raghib*); 3. Any destructive punishment; 4. A thunderbolt; 5. The cry or shout of punishment, such as the noise accompanying an earthquake, etc. (*Lisan-ul-Arab*). In the Holy Qur-ān the word has

been used only in the sense of destructive punishment. The Holy Qur-ān says : "But if they turn aside, then say, I warn you of a *ṣ 'iqah* like the *ṣā'iqah* of 'Ād and Thamūd." (Ch. XLI, 14.) Here *ṣā'iqah* cannot mean 'a thunderbolt,' for according to the Holy Qur-ān neither 'Ād nor Thamūd were destroyed with a thunderbolt. The former were destroyed with a violent storm (XLI, 17), and the latter with an earthquake (VII, 79). In the verse under comment both are described as having been destroyed with a *ṣā'iqah*. Thus it is clear that *ṣā'iqah* does not here signify 'a thunderbolt,' but any destructive punishment.

ثم بعثنكم من بعد موتكم لعلكم تشكرون۔

*57. Thumma ba'athnā-kum mimba'di mauti-kum la'allakum tashkurūn.*

57. Then We raised you up after your death, that you might be grateful.

70. The word *maut* (death) has not been used in its primary sense. The words 'while you gazed' in the previous verse show that the people had not actually died. The word *maut* bears various significations, and the Holy Qur-ān also uses it in various senses. Among other things, it denotes 'grief, sorrow or fear that disturbs one's life' (*Lane's Lexicon*, p. 2741) ; and it is in this sense that the word has been used in this verse. Another instance of this usage is to be found in Ch. XIV, 18. Hence the words 'Then We raised you up after your death,' signify that God delivered them from the grief and fear which had seized them. The verse cannot be understood to mean that they were restored to life after they had actually died, because the Holy Qur-ān clearly repudiates the idea of the dead coming to life again in this world.

This incident has not been mentioned in the Bible. But when we carefully examine the Biblical narrative as well as the Quranic version we find that the events in the Bible have not been mentioned in their due order, while the Holy Qur-ān mentions the incidents in their true

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sequence. According to the Bible, the Israelites first went to Mount Sinai and God spoke to them through Moses, and they sent back their answer to God through him; and the Lord came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai; and there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled, and Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God (Ex. XIX), and it was some days after this that the Israelites built themselves a calf and worshipped it. (Ex. XXXII.) Both these events took place in the year 1491 B. C. after a few days' interval. But we believe that the order of these events has been reversed, and that the incident of the calf took place before the going of the Israelites to Sinai and the coming down of the Lord upon the Mount in the sight of the people; for if they had already gone to the Mount with Moses and had seen God, they could not have taken the calf for their God, and they could not have said where was the God of Moses. This shows that they went to Mount Sinai after they had made the calf. They who had seen God and had witnessed lightnings and thunders and had been struck with terror could not say where God was. They who had said, Let not God speak to us, could not say, Show us God. The fact is that they had made the calf before going to Mount Sinai, and when Moses prohibited them from calf-worship, they refrained from it, but expressed a desire to see God so that they might be satisfied as to His existence. Thereupon Moses took them to the mountain and God descended on the Mount in the sight of the people. The words of the Holy Qur-ān: "Then the thunderbolt overtook you" refer to the lightnings and thunders which had caused the people to tremble with fear.

The Bible also testifies to the 'death' of which the Holy Qur-ān speaks in this verse. In Ex. XXXII, 31—35, we read: "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made

them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto Thee: behold, Mine angel shall go before thee : nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. (This shows that although God pardoned them in this world and spared them from destruction, yet they will be called to account in the life to come.—*Tr.*) And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf."

The plague spoken of in the above passage could not have befallen them after their forgiveness. This could have been the case only if they had made the calf before going to Mount Sinai, for which act they were visited with a pestilence.

In short, the Holy Qur-ān corrects the error made by the compilers of the Bible in arranging the events.

The internal evidence of the Bible itself is enough to show that the order of events as given in the Bible is erroneous while that given by the Holy Quran is correct and reasonable.

وظللنا عليكم الغمام وانزلنا عليكم المن والسلوى كلوا من طيبت ما رزقنكم وما ظلمونا ولكن كانوا انفسهم يظلمون۔

*58. Waẓallalnā 'alaikumul ghamāma wa anzalnā'alai kumul-manna wassalwā ; kulú min ṭaiyyibāti mā razaqnā-kum : wa mā ẓalamúnā wa lākin kānú anfusa-hum yazlimún.*

58. And We caused the clouds to shadow you and sent down upon you Manna and Salwā, 'Eat ye of the good things of what We have provided you with.' And they wronged us not, but it was themselves that they wronged.

71. (*a*) "And We caused the clouds to shadow you."

We learn from Ex. XL, 34—38, that clouds spread and shadowed over the spot where the Israelites encamped, and that they dispersed on the day when it was time for them to resume their journey. But the words and the context in the Holy Qur-ān show that the shadowing of the clouds means rain-fall, because the clouds that give rain are generally very dark and dense. Along with 'the clouds', the Holy Qur-ān mentions two eatables, *Manna* and *Salwā*.

This leads to the conclusion that in that wild state there was scarcity of both water and food and that God used to quench their thirst by sending dense clouds, and along with it He used to satisfy their hunger by providing Manna and Salwā. God shows special favours to His servants in order to remove their difficulties and promote their comfort. Such was His habit not only in the past, but even now He pours His blessings upon His chosen ones.

(*b*) The sending down of Manna and Salwā has been mentioned in Ex. XVI, 11—15, where we read:—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, as even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, 'It is Manna': for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

When the children of Israel got no food in the wilderness, and death stared them in the face, they began to murmur against Moses and Aaron. They said to them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we

did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." These murmurings of theirs were answered in the passage quoted above.

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*Salwā* has been translated as a quail in the Bible, but from the lexicons it appears to be the name of a bird resembling a quail and found in Bahrain. Thus they got two things to eat : *Manna* and *Salwā*.

*Manna* means (1) *Turanjabīn* (honeydew) (2) a favour or benefit (3) anything obtained without any difficulty or trouble. (*Aqrabul-Mawarid.*)

*Salwā* means (1) honey, (2) whatever renders a person contented or happy, (3) a certain bird. (*Aqrabul Mawarid.*)

The Holy Prophet says, الكمئة من المن و ماءها شفاء للعين *i.e.*, " A mushroom is one of the things which are called Manna, and the sap of it heals the eye." (Bukhari) He is also reported to have said :—" A mushroom is among the things which God bestowed upon Moses, as a free gift." (Bahr-i-Muhit.) This shows that according to the Holy Prophet of Islam, God provided the Israelites with many things in the wilderness, sometimes one thing and sometimes another, so that they were never allowed to remain hungry.

(*c*) God does not mention how they wronged themselves. But as in the preceding portion of the verse, God speaks of the favours which He bestowed upon them, this shows that they wronged themselves by showing ingratitude and continuing to grumble and complain of their lot in spite of God's special favours and by doing so, they did no harm to God or His Messenger, but a decided harm to their ownselves. Thus they were cruel to their ownselves.

واذ قلنا ادخلوا هذه القرية فكلوا منها حيث شئتم رغداً واد خلوا الباب سجداً وقولوا حطة نغفرلكم خطيكم وسنزيد المحسنين- فبدل الذين ظلموا قولاً غير الذى قيل لهم فانزلنا على الذين ظلموا رجزا من السماء بما كانوا يفسقون-

*59. Wa idh qulnad-khulū hādhihil qaryata fa kulu minhā haithu shi'tum raghadan-wadkhulul-bāba sujjadan-wa qūlū ḥiṭṭatun naghfir la kum khatāyā-kum ; wa sanazīdul-muḥsinīn.*

*60. Fá badda-lalladhīna ẓalamū qaulan ghairal-ladhī qīla la hum, fa anzalnā 'alalladhīna ẓalamū rijzam minas-samā'i bi mā kānū yafsuqūn.*

59. And *remember* when We said, "Enter this town and eat therefrom freely wherever you will, and enter the gate in perfect humility and say, 'We beseech forgiveness of sins,' we will forgive you your errors, and we will give increase to the righteous."

60. But the transgressors changed it for a word other than that which was told them. So we sent down upon the transgressors a punishment from heaven, because they had rebelled.

72. سجدا *Sujjadan* cannot be taken here in the sense of falling prostrate, for one cannot pass through a gate after one has fallen prostrate on the ground. Evidently, it is used in the sense of being humble or submissive.

حطة *Ḥiṭṭatun* is a substantive from استحط وزره meaning 'a request for the putting down of a heavy burden' (*vide* Lane's Lexicon). In theology, to seek relief from burden is to seek forgiveness of sins. So, the word means 'Forgive us our sins.'

In these two verses, another instance is cited to show the ingratitude of the Israelites. It is related of them that they were once ordered to enter a habitation praying and asking forgiveness. But instead of praying, they used words conveying a sense of derision towards the prayer taught by God, for which they had to be chastised.

The Bible makes no mention of this incident, but it speaks of a battle which took place between the Amalekites and the Israelites in Rephidim (Ex. XVII, 13) which shows

that the Amalekites inhabited this land. As the Israelites were eager to live in inhabited places, it appears that they were bidden to go to some village. This part was inhabited (*vide* Encyclopædia Biblica, vol. IV. cols. 4036, 37) and the presence of a desert does not preclude the existence of habitations, because even wandering tribes make here and there small habitations which serve as meeting-places for their scattered clans.

وَاِذِ اسْتَسْقٰى مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ۖ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ
عَيْنًا ۖ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ۖ كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ۔

*61. Wa idhis-tasqā Mūsā li qaumi-hī fa qulnaḍrib bi 'aṣa kal ḥajar. Fanfajarat minhuthnatā 'ashrata 'ainā; qad 'alima kullu unāsim-mashraba-hum; kulú washrabú mir-rizqillāhi wa lā ta'thau fil-arḍi mufsidīn.*

61. And *remember* when Moses prayed for water for his people, and We said, 'Strike the rock with Thy rod'; on this there flowed from it twelve springs; every tribe knew their drinking place. 'Eat and drink of Allah's sustenance, and commit not iniquity in the earth, causing disorder'.

73. This verse mentions another favour. When the Israelites were hard pressed by thirst, and no water was procurable in the desert, God saved them by revealing to Moses the knowledge of a rock from which water flowed out, when struck with the rod.

The Israelites' demand for water and their being supplied with it is mentioned at two places in the Bible. At one place, mention is made of the twelve springs of Elim, but nothing is said there of Moses' striking the rock with his rod. (Ex. XV, 27.) At the second place, Moses, by divine command, strikes the rock Horeb with his rod, and there flows out a spring at which the Israelites and their animals slake their thirst. (Ex. XVII, 1—7; Numb. XX.) Here no mention is made of the 12 springs. It appears that the Holy Qur-ān refers to the occurrence relating to

the rock of Horeb, because with the slight difference in the number of springs, almost all the details narrated in the Bible concur with the narrative of the Holy Qur-ān. As for the difference in the number of springs, reason favours the narrative of the Holy Qur-ān. At the least computation, the Israelites numbered several thousand souls, besides the riding animals and beasts of burden, and one spring was certainly insufficient for such a large number, especially when we take into consideration the fact that the thirsty Israelites were, according to the Bible, in a state of extreme exasperation and were prepared even to stone Moses to death.

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If there is no trace of the twelve springs at present, it is no wonder, for it is a matter of common experience that out of the several springs rising at the same spot some have their openings closed and cease to flow. But from a testimony quoted by Sale in his Translation, it appears that at the end of the fifteenth century, twelve springs were actually flowing. He says:—"One who went into those parts in the end of the fifteenth century tells us expressly that the water issued from twelve places of the rock according to the number of tribes of Israel."

It must be noted with regard to this miracle that it is not against the course of nature. The miracle of Moses does not lie in doing anything against the laws of nature, but it lies in the fact that God pointed out to him the specific spot where water was just ready to flow at a single blow of his rod. It is within the experience of all who study geological conditions in rocky districts that very often water flows underneath small hillocks and rocks.

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THE Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets he came to serve and reinterpret the final and eternal teachings laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the true and real Islam and seeks to uplift humanity and establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, under whose direction the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:—

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